## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## National Water Safety Month & Recreational Water Illness and Injury Prevention Week

**San Bernardino**: May is recognized as National Water Safety Month and the week of May 20-26 is designated as Recreational Water Illness and Injury (RWII) Prevention Week. The County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services uses these yearly observances to promote healthy recreational water experiences and raise awareness about safe swimming behaviors.

Every year, thousands of Americans get sick with recreational water illnesses (RWIs), which are caused by germs found in places where we swim. RWIs are preventable and swimmers can protect themselves and other swimmers by practicing the following recommendations:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make others sick.
- Don't swallow pool water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Shower with soap before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body end up in the water.
- Parents of young children should remember to wash their children before swimming (especially their rear ends). Check your child's diaper every 30–60 minutes, and be sure to change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at the poolside. Germs can spread in and around the pool. Take your kids to the bathroom every 30–60 minutes. Waiting to hear "I have to go" may mean that it's too late

Every day, two children under the age of 14 years die from drowning; it is the leading cause of death for children 1 to 4 years old. Parents and caregivers can keep their children safe from drowning by promoting the following safe behaviors:

- Prepare by making sure that everyone knows how to swim, and older children and adults know CPR.
- When in the water, keep swimmers safe by:
  - Using life jackets that fit for younger or weaker swimmers.

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- Providing continuous, attentive supervision close to the swimmers even if there is a lifeguard.
- Avoiding alcohol and drugs when swimming or watching swimmers.
- When NOT in the water, prevent access to the water by:
  - Installing and maintaining barriers (for pools: 4-sided fencing and weightbearing covers).
  - Using locks or alarms for windows and doors.

The Division of Environmental Health will promote these observances through educational programs, public service announcements, social media outreach, and the distribution of water safety-themed materials. A special edition of the <u>Pool of Knowledge Newsletter</u> will be published.

For additional information on drowning prevention and pool safety, please visit <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming">www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming</a> and <a href="https://www.poolsafely.gov">www.poolsafely.gov</a>.

For more information, contact the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services at (800) 442-2283 or visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph/dehs.

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